
A New Species of *Ruprechtia* (Polygonaceae) from the Venezuelan Guayana

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ABSTRACT. *Ruprechtia howardiana*, from deciduous forests in Bolívar state, Venezuela, is newly described and illustrated. It appears most closely related to *R. ramiflora* (Jacquin) Meyer.

Ruprechtia is a genus of small trees or shrubs from neotropical dry and riverine forests. The genus has been closely allied with *Triplaris*, but differs in its 2- or 3-flowered pistillate partial inflorescences, a basal pedicel-like extension of the perianth tube in fruit, and pedicellate male flowers with perianth segments connate for less than a third of their length (Brandbyge & Øllgaard, 1984; Brandbyge, 1986). It also typically has fewer pairs of secondary leaf veins (less than 12) than *Triplaris*, smaller leaves, and achenes loosely enclosed within the fruiting perianth.

The species described below was treated by Howard (1985: 507) as an "unplaced collection," a probable new species for which he wanted additional specimens before describing. Although it is still known only from staminate material, the specimens are distinct enough from other members of the genus for us to describe it at this time, making it available for inclusion in the upcoming Polygonaceae treatment for the *Flora of the Venezuelan Guayana*.

Ruprechtia howardiana Aymard & P. E. Berry, sp. nov. TYPE: Venezuela. Bolívar: middle Río Orinoco, Cerro Baraguán and vicinity, dry forest, 100–330 m, 13 Jan. 1956, *Wurdack & Monachino 41230* (holotype, VEN; isotypes, HB, MO, NY, US). Figure 1.

Species nova quae *R. ramiflorae* (Jacquin) Meyer affinis sed ab ea foliis subtus inflorescentiaque dense hirsutis, costa supra depressa atque sepalis ovatis usque obovatis differt.

Dioecious tree ca. 3 m tall; twigs with solid in-

ternodes. Branchlets densely pubescent, becoming glabrescent when mature, lenticellate; leafy internodes 1.5–3(–4) cm long. Leaves simple, alternate, ovate, chartaceous, 7–16 × 4–8 cm, the base acute or slightly unequal, the apex acuminate, margins subrevolute, the midrib depressed above, glabrous on the upper surface except the midrib and secondary nerves covered by a gray appressed pubescence, brownish hirsute on the lower surface, more densely so on the midrib and secondary nerves; lateral nerves 10–15 on each side, tertiary venation conspicuous on both sides; petioles 4–6 mm long, densely yellow pubescent; stipules forming a short (1 mm) tube around the stem and leaving a ring around the stem. Inflorescence axillary racemes or dense clusters of racemes 2–9 cm long; pedicels 1.5–3 mm long, sparsely appressed pubescent to glabrous; staminate flowers white, sepals 3, ovate to obovate, 1–2 mm long, membranaceous, glabrous on both sides, ciliate at the margins; petals 3, similar to the sepals and alternate with them; stamens 7–9, filaments glabrous, 2–3 mm long; anthers glabrous, ca. 0.8 mm long; oblong, pistillode absent; pistillate flowers and fruit not seen.

Ruprechtia howardiana is most closely allied to *R. ramiflora* from Venezuela, Colombia, Guyana, and Brazil but differs in its inflorescence and lower surface of the leaves densely hirsute, the midrib impressed on the upper surface, and the sepals ovate to obovate. *Ruprechtia ramiflora* occurs in a wide variety of habitat types but has glabrous to sparsely pubescent leaves and inflorescences, the midrib elevated on the upper leaf surface, and the sepals spatulate.

This species is named after Richard Alden Howard (1917–) for his previous work on *Triplaris*, *Coccoloba*, and other members of the Polygonaceae.

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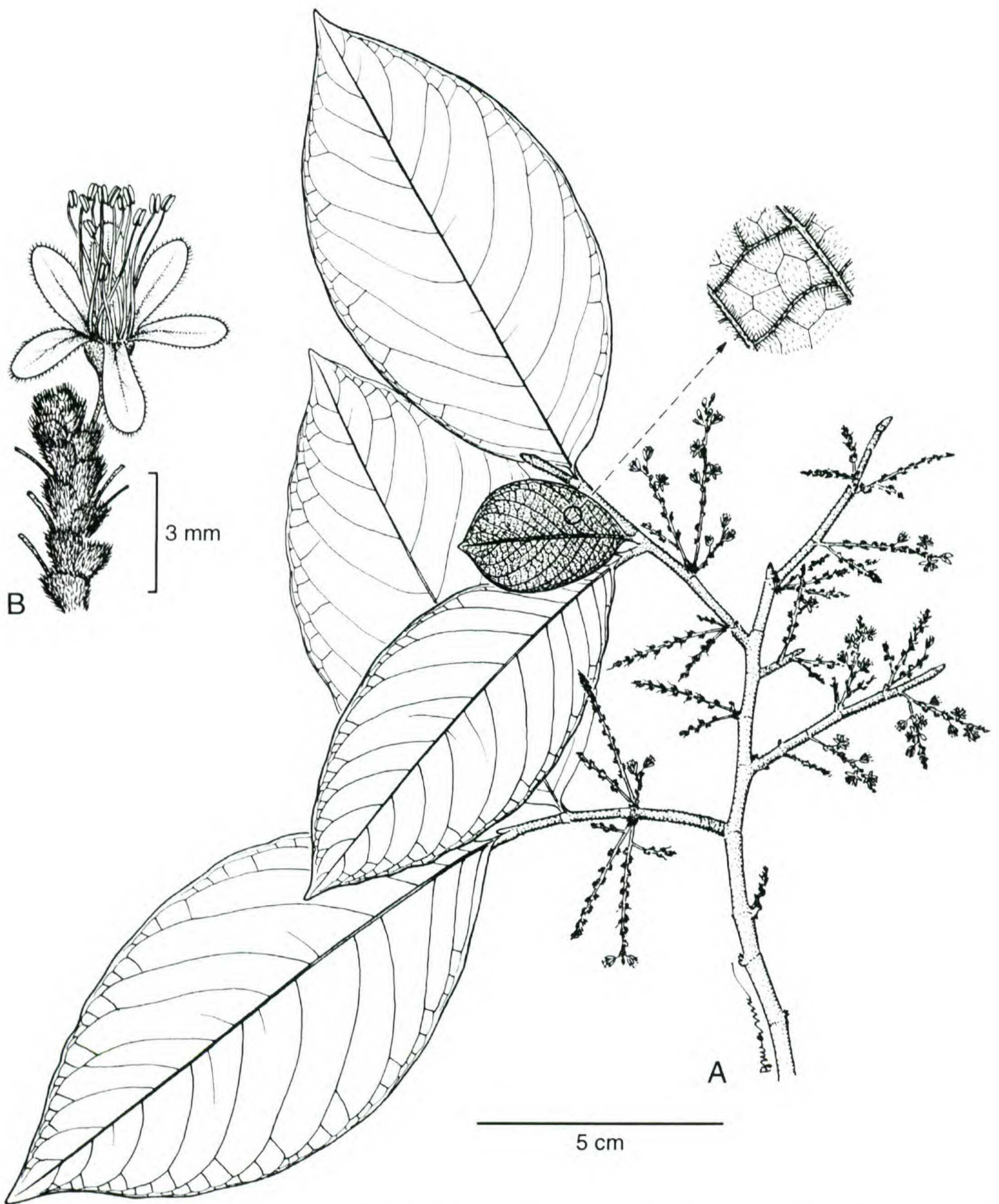


Figure 1. *Ruprechtia howardiana* Aymard & P. E. Berry. —A. Flowering branch. —B. Detail of male flower. Based on Wurdack & Monachino 41230.

eau for revising the Latin diagnosis and to Bruno Manara for preparing the illustration.

Literature Cited

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